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Greig O'Brien Managing Editor gobrien@hanleywood.com
Meghan Drueding, LEED Green Assoc. Senior Editor mdrueding@hanleywood.com
Bruce D. Snider Senior Contributing Editor bsnider@hanleywood.com
Cheryl Weber, LEED AP Senior Contributing Editor
Kriston Capps Senior Editor, Online kcapps@hanleywood.com
Wanda Lau Associate Editor, Technology wlau@hanleywood.com
Lindsey M. Roberts Associate Editor, Online lmroberts@hanleywood.com
Alexandra Rice QA/Copy Editor arice@hanleywood.com
Armando Manzanares Senior Web Producer amanzanares@hanleywood.com
Jessica Rubenstein Graphic Designer jrubenstein@hanleywood.com
Ned Cramer, Assoc. AIA Editorial Director, Commercial Design

Cathy Underwood Director of Production and Production Technologies
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Editorial and Advertising Offices
One Thomas Circle NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
Phone 202.452.0800 / Fax 202.785.1974

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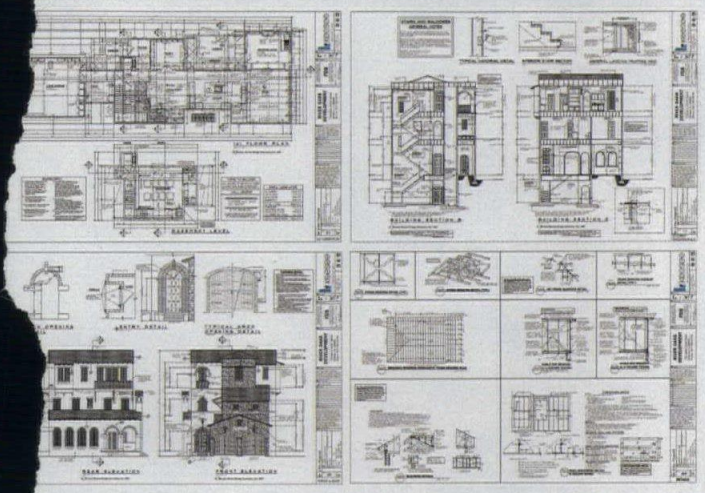
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Jeff Calore Executive Vice President, Residential Construction
Phone 202.380.3766 Fax 202.785.1974 jcalore@hanleywood.com

Joanna Mott Group Publishing Support Manager
Phone 773.824.2459 jmott@hanleywood.com

Mari Skelnik Director, Media Services
Phone 773.824.2463 mskelnik@hanleywood.com

Midwest
Mark Cullum Regional Sales Manager
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John Murphy Regional Sales Manager
430 First Avenue N., Suite 550, Minneapolis, MN 55401
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Southeast/Mid-Atlantic
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Classified Advertising
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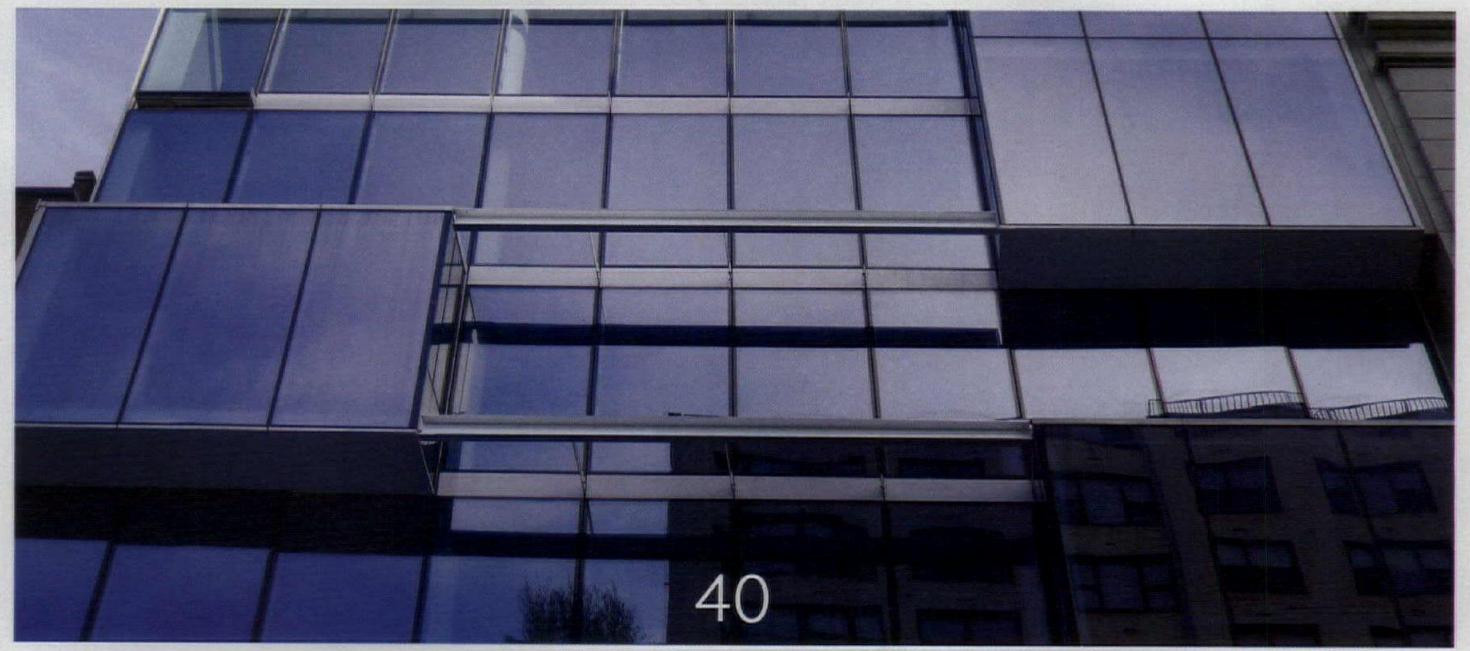
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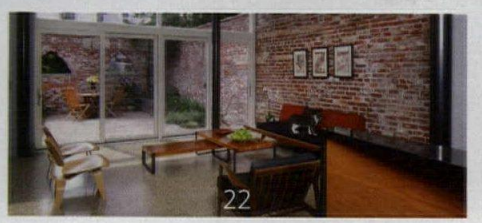
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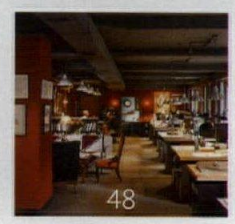
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Embracing the Future

IT'S TIME TO SHED THE DEATH GRIP OF THE RECENT PAST.



ELI KAPLAN

FIVE REASONS YOUR CLIENTS SHOULD SAY YES.

AS I WRITE THIS, for the first time since the recession began, the AIA's Architectural Billings Index is in the positive zone in all regions of the country. No one is ready to exhale yet, and many residential firms are still suffering, but signs are indicating a recovery in the housing industry. A slow and tentative one, yes, but we're all ready to engage in some positive thinking.

I've spoken with quite a few architects who say that the phone is ringing again, even if potential clients on the other end aren't quite ready to pull the trigger on design fees. Or perhaps design is going ahead, but the big question is whether the clients will ultimately break ground.

What we need are some compelling reasons in our arsenal to convince people to go ahead and build that dream house or add on that new kitchen/family room/master bedroom suite. And I have a few of those reasons up my sleeve. Give them a try—gently—with your tire kickers and tell me if they work.

1. As the market bounces back, the waiting time for the architect of their choice will increase. And that architect will be balancing more projects at one time.

2. Waiting longer means talented builders and subs may not be available to build their house.

3. And with longer waiting times come increased carrying costs on land (if your clients are building new) and potentially higher lending costs (if your clients are not self-funding the job).

4. Building material costs will inevitably go up with increased market demand. Manufacturers have closed many plants and have laid off skilled workers, severely reducing production capacity.

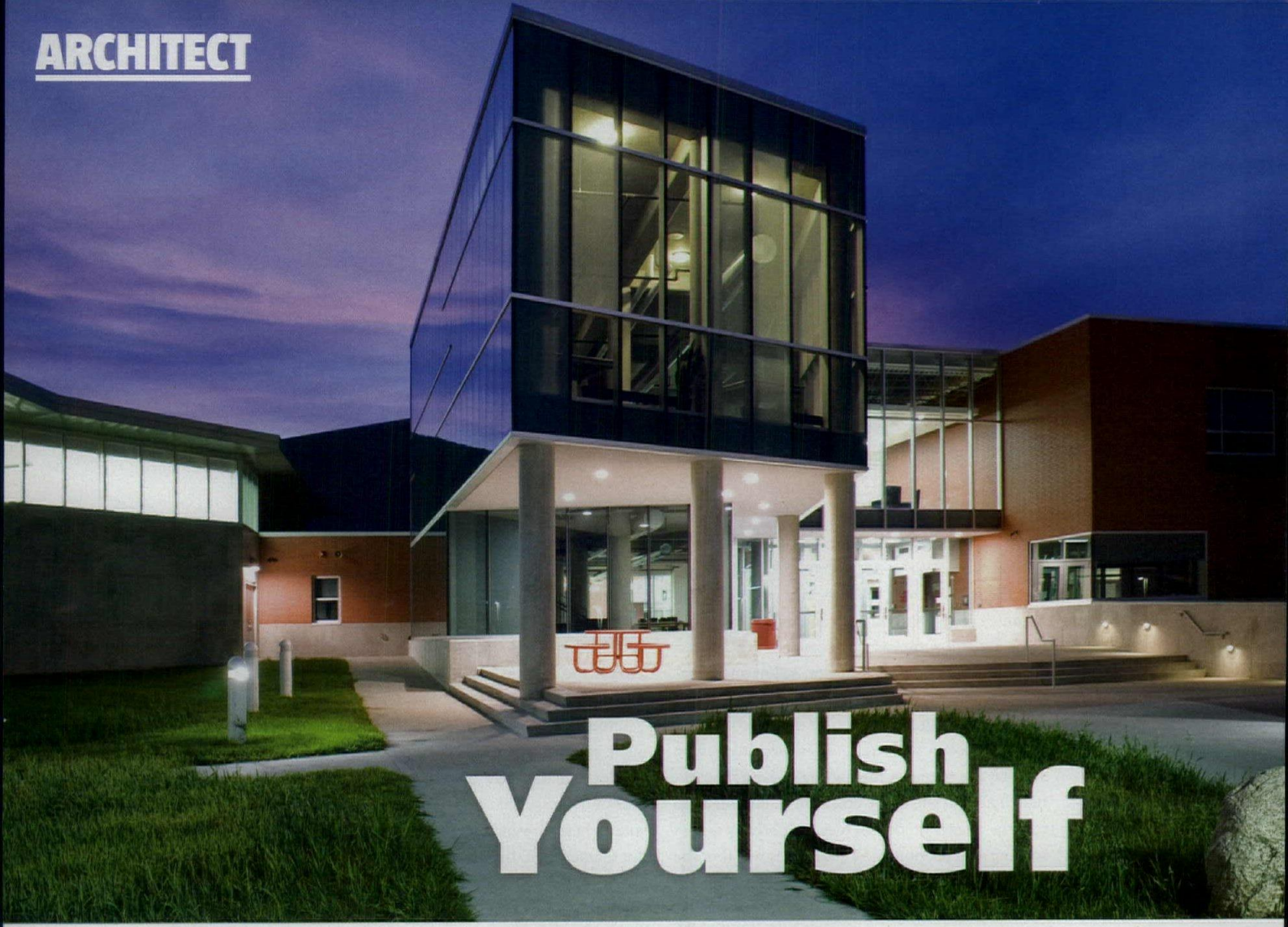
5. Relatedly, waiting times for delivery of materials will increase because of shortages and backlogs at the plants. And that, in turn, will increase project carrying costs and delay the construction timeline. Furthermore, manufacturers currently have a greater incentive to work with architects and builders on custom solutions. They will have less time to do so as the market returns, and those custom solutions will likely cost more.

What we have right now is the perfect moment in time to get the best architect, the best builder, and the best materials to build a solid, beautiful house. That team also has the time to devote its best care and attention to your clients' job. But tempus fugit. In fact, the time is passing, or has passed already, in parts of the country.

I don't think we'll see another building boom like we had in the previous decade. But I know the talent to design and build a top-notch house has contracted dramatically since the building bust. The number of desirable building sites is also dwindling as speculative builders snap them up in anticipation of increased demand for new housing.

Is this really the perfect time to design and build a new custom home? I think so—if your clients want the most bang for their buck. Does that mean the stock market will never dip again? Certainly not. Will housing prices never decline again? No guarantees. But our homes were never meant to be a Vegas jackpot; they're the center of our lives. Building a house is always a leap of faith—like marriage or a new job—but nothing worth having comes without a measure of risk and fear of the unknown. It's time to embrace the future and shed the death grip of the recent past.

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AIAVOICES

RESEARCH IN MOTION | ADVANCING BUILDING PERFORMANCE

Alison Kwok, AIA, received an AIA Upjohn Research Initiative grant in 2007, which resulted in her 2009 report "Case Studies of Carbon Neutrality," a catalog of the design and delivery process for carbon neutral buildings that mapped design intent onto actual performance based on the 2030 Challenge. That report became the basis for a series of five articles and related case study e-books for the USGBC's "LEED Stories from Practice," which covers topics such as building management and quantifying sustainability. Kwok serves on the board of the Passive House Institute US and teaches architecture at the University of Oregon.

In 1998, I began teaching at Oregon, where there is a critical mass of faculty members who have design and technology backgrounds. So the conversation here in design studios is very fluid, and we can move forward on an idea quickly because everyone is on the same page. My own research has been in natural ventilation in the tropics as well as, more generally, building performance as it relates to design intentions. Translating that into an educational context has been rewarding—teaching research skills, how to ask critical questions, how to use cutting-edge equipment.

We've seen a lot of those lines of inquiry go into practice. But the fact remains that tracking post-occupancy building performance is challenging—and so is integrating that process into a firm's own identity and operation. But it's happened—and it's happening. Some firms have successfully done it. What's the real challenge? The education component. In other words, it's not just about understanding building performance within architecture education—it's also about education within the firms. Who pays for folks to get up to speed on calculating energy use intensity (EUI) or to design for net-zero energy? Education needs champions and money. But incorporating the effort and understanding the basic principles of building performance will render positive results.

When I interviewed architects and engineers for my research, I was pleased with how willing they were to share information about how their firms work. I think firm principals were so willing to help because they believe in what they're doing, and that tracking building performance is a value-driven system. Practitioners and design professionals involved in the 2030 Commitment were really engaged in that enterprise. It was not all about the process, though—it was also about firm culture. Can you work with other people? Can you lead other people across other disciplines? As the next generation of students moves into practice, I think that would be a useful thing to know if you're looking for a job. —*As told to William Richards* AIA

AIAPRACTICE

BRAND ELEMENTS | NOTES ON NAMES

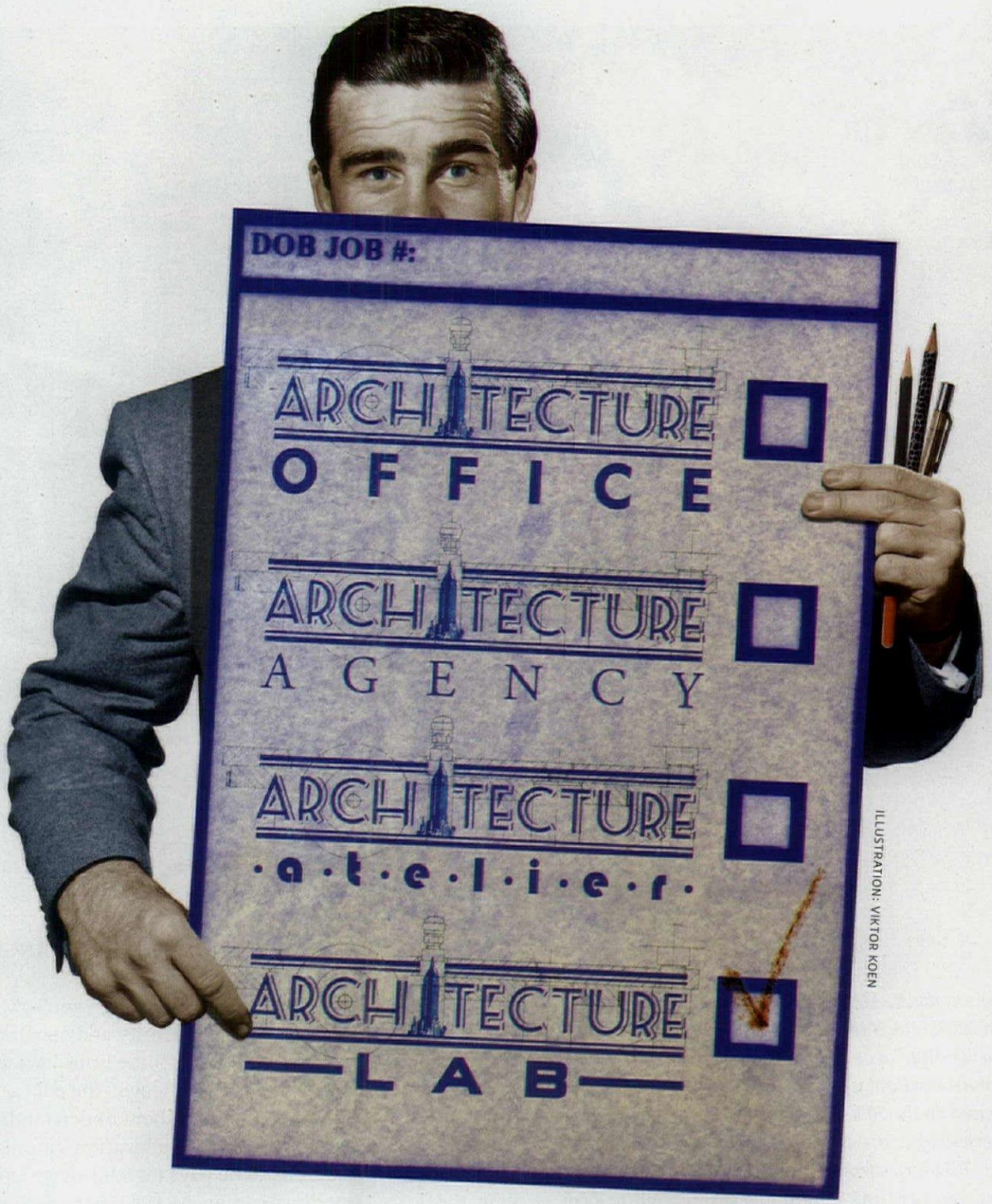


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WHAT'S THE FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS WHEN STARTING AN architecture firm? Choosing a name for your firm. This is not a decision to be taken lightly. The choices are varied and the ramifications are staggering. The name of your firm is a major component of your overall brand—the first thing people will hear, see, and judge. Because the personality of the firm is going to be projected by the name, the decision on what to call the firm is critical, so you had better take it seriously. Everyone else will.

In the 19th century, before architects were licensed professionals, professionalization meant attaching credibility to the practice of architecture to distinguish it from other trade crafts, such as carpentry. Architecture firms looked to established and respected law firms for examples of how to name their firms and followed suit by stringing together the last names of the founding partners: McKim, Mead & White; Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge; Burnham and Root; Adler & Sullivan. The list goes on.

It's not the most creative method—but it's still in place for its simplicity and elegance, as is the later advent of initialed firms such as HOK, RMJM, and RTKL. In a highly scientific study (conducted by me), I asked the first eight architecturally educated people I know under the age of 40 to tell me what the initials in those firms stands for. Nobody knew. (To wit: Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum; Robert Matthew Johnson-Marshall; Rogers Taliaferro Kostritsky Lamb.) Even if the original named, or initialed, partners are no longer around, the abbreviation remains a classic approach for its brevity—though it can be a bit cloudy.

A popular alternative to proper names is advancing an idea or brand identity through a firm's derived purpose. Seattle architects Kevin Eckert and Andrew van Leeuwen are straightforward about their approach. "We named our firm 'Build' to underscore that we get stuff done," Eckert says. Unsurprisingly, because they are a design/build firm, this approach made sense for them as they established their brand—not to mention potential phonetic challenges had they decided to string together Eckert and van Leeuwen.

Naming can also be highly personal—a branding device that lets people know what you care about both in and out of the office. Fivecat Studio (formerly McCarthy LePage Architects) in Pleasantville, N.Y., is piloted by Annmarie McCarthy, AIA, and Mark LePage, AIA. McCarthy and LePage, who are married as well as business partners, are lifelong animal rescue and adoption advocates who have quite a few rescue animals at home. "We searched for a name that could not only separate us from the crowded pack of 'Smith and Smith Architects,'" McCarthy says, "but that could also fuel our passion for helping helpless cats and dogs."

Firms that choose to work around the "Smith and Smith" naming convention often privilege an idea or quality over the principals behind those ideas. Jill Finn, Assoc. AIA, owner of TANGERINEdesign in Berkeley, Calif., says that choosing her firm name had more to do with practicalities and marketability than identity. "I didn't want to name it after myself, as I wasn't sure if I was going to make it in the architecture field. I wanted a name that could represent some of my other creative endeavors," Finn says. "I kept saying to myself, 'I want something tangible,' and there was something about that word 'tangible,' which became 'tangerine.' And since I'm a redhead and come from an advertising background, I knew the color reference would be something to stand out and help clients to remember me."

While some architects feel that deviating from the traditional route of partner names is more inclusive of the firm's identity, most architects still hold that having specific names incorporated into the firm's name is the most effective approach. For instance, 46 of the 50 firms from the ARCHITECT 50 survey last year featured names or initials of either current partners or founding partners—firms such as Perkins+Will, NBBJ, and Ann Beha Architects.

There's another side to this, too, which has to do with the life of a brand. Established firms with venerated partners, respected track records, and cultural currency are disinclined to jeopardize that foundation for fear of erasing their reputations in the very fickle collective consciousness. New York's Ennead Architects (formerly Polshek Partnership) is a notable exception. But, in this case, that kind of fearlessness seems to be part of the firm's DNA: It's the fifth name change in 50 years.

Still, there's something to be said for sticking to the tried-and-true. When Andrew Hawkins, AIA, got ready to hang a shingle for his College Station, Texas, firm, he "toyed around with other nontraditional names—but I didn't want potential clients to think they weren't dealing with the firm's principal, simply because I was younger." He also felt that "Hawkins Architecture" wouldn't evoke the kind of work they do, even if it was clear that it was an architecture firm. In the end, Hawkins added the tagline "Think+Create+Sustain" to Hawkins Architecture. "While I did go the traditional route," he says, "I wanted to add a bit of flair to let people know that we were anything but traditional." —*Bob Borson, AIA* AIA

Bob Borson is a Texas-based architect and blogger at lifeofanarchitect.com.

AIAPERSPECTIVE

THREE POINTS

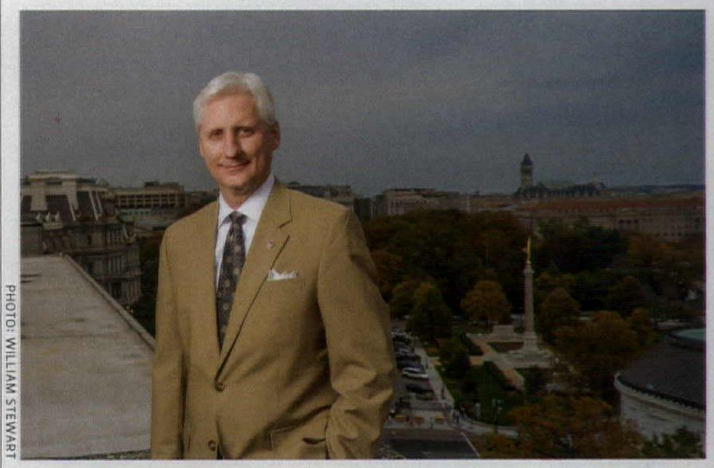


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RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTS LOOKING TO SUCCEED IN THE remaining years of this decade will need to address three related issues: sustainable design principles, attainable housing, and resilience. When it comes to sustainability, the market already favors products that use less energy. This bias will accelerate, with an added twist: Clients will demand that the claims being made for "green design" are evidence-based and verifiable. Those architects who can provide this level of performance and data will have a leg up in the marketplace.

The principle of sustainability must be treated as more than just saving energy. It must promote a new culture of living that addresses the reduction of the use of fossil fuels and promotes a healthier lifestyle that focuses not on the car, but on the pedestrian. Architects have a responsibility both to respect the environment and to use design to improve our communities' quality of life.

In responding to the second trend, attainable housing, successful architects will be those who recognize that they're in the business of improving lives. This is an opportunity for architects to lead the development of well-designed housing that responds to the functional, social, and financial demands of a wide variety of community needs. Whether the challenge is serving low-income families, those new to the U.S., the elderly, those who have lost their homes, or veterans transitioning from military to civilian lives, access to attainable housing is essential to economic stability.

Architects who approach housing as an opportunity to make a positive difference will influence the process of shaping local, state, and national policy—and they will play a major role in our nation's economic recovery. Never before has it been more important to have leaders who are committed to a safe, healthy, and prosperous future for our communities.

The final trend shaping the future of residential design is resilience. Natural disasters are inevitable. In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, architects must lead the discussion of re-evaluating how we rebuild and plan for the ever-increasing number of communities that are made vulnerable to natural disasters. Architects who incorporate resilience into the design of our nation's housing will not only be welcomed, but will be sought out in the marketplace. AIA

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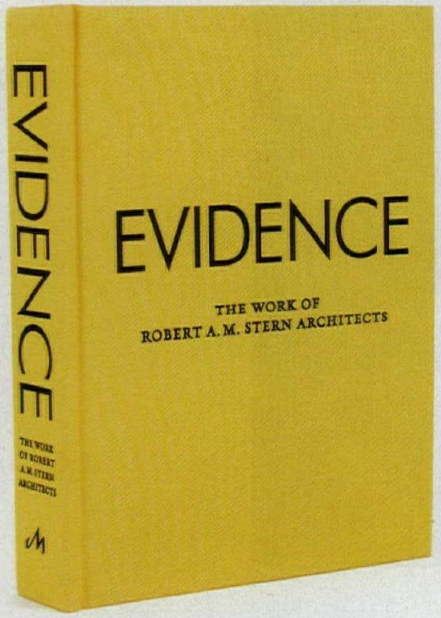
Bay windows are synonymous with San Francisco housing, and Anne Fougeron, FAIA, enjoys them as much as the next person. Yet when the San Francisco architect went to design Wavehouse, a 34-unit condo building in the city's Hayes Valley neighborhood, she decided on an abstract interpretation of this hallowed tradition. "We're interested in the dynamic aspect of bay windows," Fougeron says. "But we're creating buildings that undulate, rather than adding to the façade." Wavehouse's faceted form grabs and extends views in the same way that a classic bay window does—but in a more streamlined fashion.

The façade's rounded-wood rainscreen enhances the feeling of movement while referencing the area's many wood buildings. This textured skin helps save energy, as does the project's solar orientation and cross-ventilation. A central courtyard, with landscaping designed by Marta Fry, serves as a conductor of light and a circulation zone for residents. (Fougeron says the mews-like site plan plays off the layout of nearby Fulton Grove, a 1992 project by Dan Solomon, FAIA.)

Developers DM Development and DDG Partners will price most of Wavehouse's units at market rate but will sell a few for substantially less to meet local affordable housing requirements. Parking is 5 feet below grade, with one spot for every two units. And the project will contain 2,000 square feet of ground-floor retail.

BOOK REVIEW

Case Study

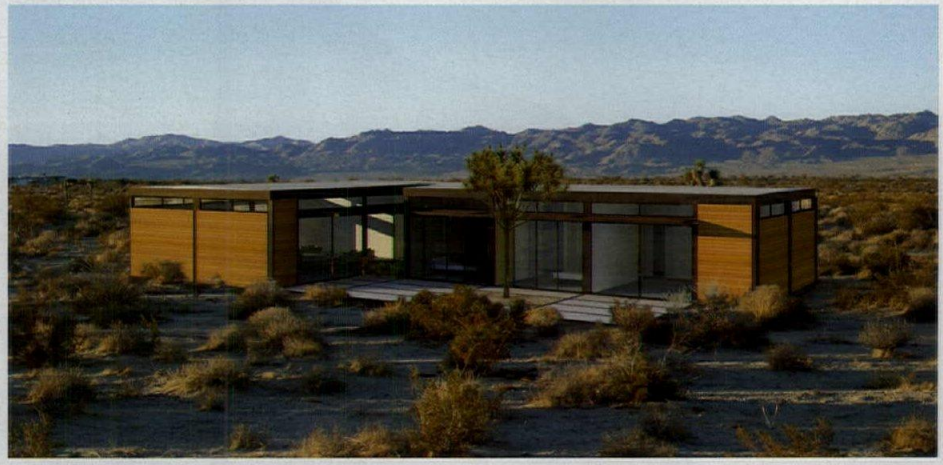


Just because a firm is traditional or modern doesn't mean that its buildings are all fluted columns or glass curtainwalls. Want proof? Robert A.M. Stern Architects (RAMSA) has proof—or rather, "evidence," as its new monograph is titled.

Like a clue from the scene of a crime, police-tape-yellow *Evidence* (The Monacelli Press, 2012) comes wrapped in a plastic bag with an ID tag: "2012, Date Found; 05231939, Case Number." "The intention was to show that ... the firm doesn't have a single stylistic position," says Peter Morris Dixon, RAMSA's director of external communications. Inside, pairs of pages feature two images of contrasting examples—of windows, for example, from different houses—instead of the traditional full-project presentation. Partner Gary Brewer, AIA, says that "many monographs are deadly dull, and you look at them once and put it away." This one has our attention for sure. —LINDSEY M. ROBERTS

RA See full slideshows at residentialarchitect.com

Prefab Within Reach



Modern prefab often costs more than a typical homeowner can afford. LivingHomes aims to change this situation with its new CK series of LEED-Platinum modular homes, which are designed for infill sites and cost about $145 per square foot. Shown above is the three-bedroom CK5. —M.D.

THE NEXT FILES

Alley Man

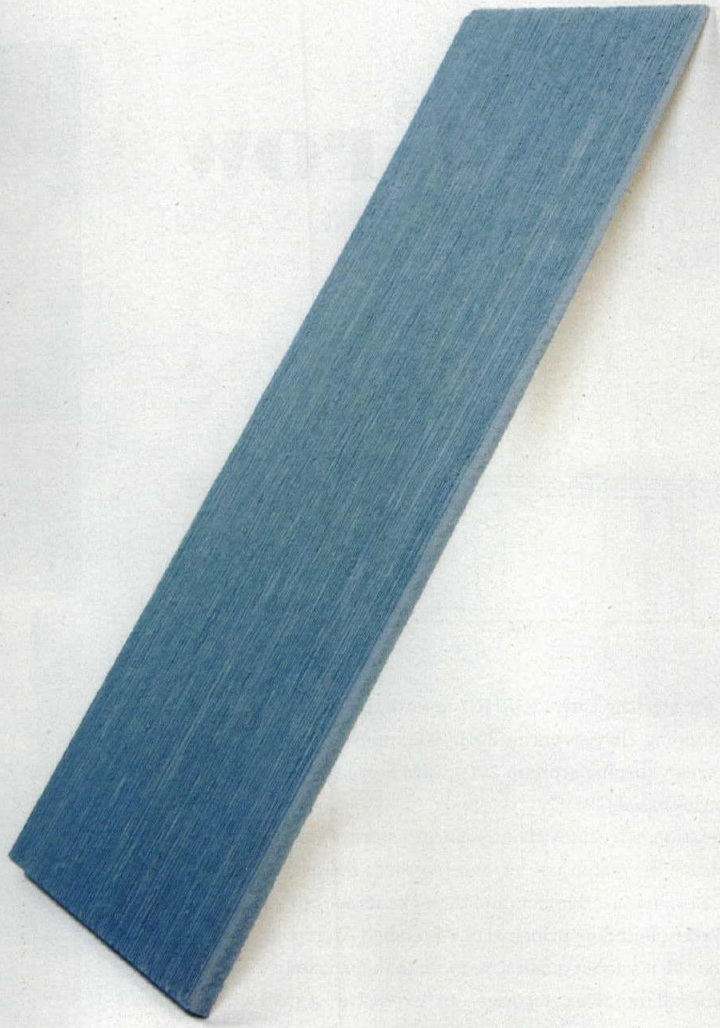


Daniel Toole, Assoc. AIA, fell in love with alleys in 2008, when he first moved to Seattle. On his way to work, "I started walking through the alleys instead of the streets," he says, "and I was just amazed." Convinced that he had stumbled upon an underutilized resource, he began photographing, sketching, and brainstorming the architectural and urban-planning potential of alleys on his blog, alleysofseattle.com. A 2010 AIA Seattle fellowship funded an international alley-study tour, which Toole documented in his self-published book *Tight Urbanism*.

"I'd heard that Melbourne [Australia] was kind of the alley capital of the world," says Toole, who studied that city's successful effort to fight urban blight by developing its "laneways" for public use and encouraging owners to open their buildings' side walls with storefronts. "It makes the alley safe and turns it into a reclaimed urban infrastructure," Toole says, a lesson reflected in Tokyo nightlife alleys that have thrived "for something like 200 years."

Back at home, Toole has since consulted on alley-development projects in and near Seattle. And while that focus may never form the core of a professional practice, he says, "it's definitely influenced how I look at a design problem, whether it's a library or a house. It's opened my eyes to how important it is to understand how cities work." It's also made him a lot of friends. "People contact me from all over the world for research," he says. "And just to get in touch." —BRUCE D. SNIDER

TOP: COURTESY LIVINGHOMES





Christopher Rose, AIA
Christopher Rose Architects
Johns Island, S.C.

ARCHITECTS' CHOICE

A Lasting Impression

TEXT BY WANDA LAU
ILLUSTRATION BY KELSEY DAKE

The humid salt air of coastal environments takes a toll on exteriors. That's why veteran seaside architect Christopher Rose, AIA, specified NuCedar Mills Classic R&R Shingles for his marquee project, the HGTV Dream Home 2013. Unlike some faux products "where you can see the same pattern in every fourth shingle," he says, the prefinished cellular PVC shingles are distinct with the "inconsistency of the real product."

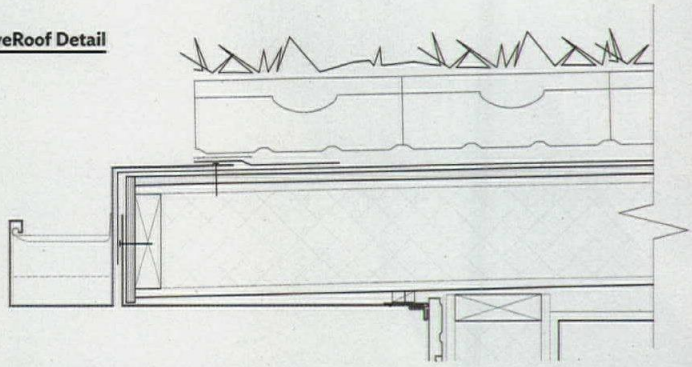
Unlike the real thing, however, these shingles are impervious to water and insects. "You don't have to worry about mold, mildew, or rot," he says. Available in 13- and 18-inch lengths, or in 48-inch panels, the recyclable shingles come in 18 standard colored finishes guaranteed against chipping, peeling, or cracking. After revisiting several completed projects, Rose says he's still enamored by the shingles' performance. "This material looks more like the real material in perpetuity." NuCedar Mills, nucedar.com

DOCTOR SPEC

In the Grow

WHAT ARCHITECTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GREEN ROOFS.

LiveRoof Detail



A popular option for green roofs is a modular system of 2-foot crates pre-planted with growing medium and plants. Farley favors systems by Spring Lake, Mich.–based LiveRoof, because they're easy to install as well as remove, should a membrane leak and need repair.

Green Roofs for Healthy Cities (GRHC) reports the green roofing industry grew by a whopping 115 percent in 2011. The industry has increased every year since it began keeping score in 2004, says Steven W. Peck, president of Toronto, Ontario–based GRHC.

Roof vegetation, advocates claim, manages stormwater, reduces heat island effect, cleans the water and air, and improves the overall health of the environment. Residential architects and their clients see other pluses, as well. Says Patrick Farley, founding principal of Watershed Architects in Richmond, Va., "In residential, it's about qualitative more than quantitative benefits."

Green roofs fall into two categories—an "extensive" system with 6 inches or less of growing medium and an "intensive" system with more than 6 inches. An extensive roof is lightweight and requires less maintenance, but it supports less plant diversity, Peck explains. An intensive roof is "durable, supports a wider range of plants and trees, and acts as an outdoor space."

"One of the simple things that surprised us on our first project [in 2006] is that a green roof is an ecosystem, and it comes with some issues," Farley recalls. Namely, its attractiveness to birds. "Their droppings contained seeds, and grass and weeds started growing in the sedums. As a result, the roof required a fair amount of maintenance."

There are also design limitations to consider. Sod is ideal on a flat roof, but challenging to install on a sloped deck (some guidelines set the limit at 40 degrees). "You get less water retention and subject the plants to more wind and solar radiation," Peck says. Numerous installations disregard the standard, however, and Farley has done a modular green roof on a 12/12 deck. "It can be done, but you have to do an elaborate anchoring detail to hold the modules in place." The paramount consideration, however, is weight. "The structure has to be designed to carry the load," Peck says. Farley heartily agrees: "If there is ever a time to overbuild on a house, this is the time to do it." —NIGEL F. MAYNARD

RA See full detail drawing at residentialarchitect.com





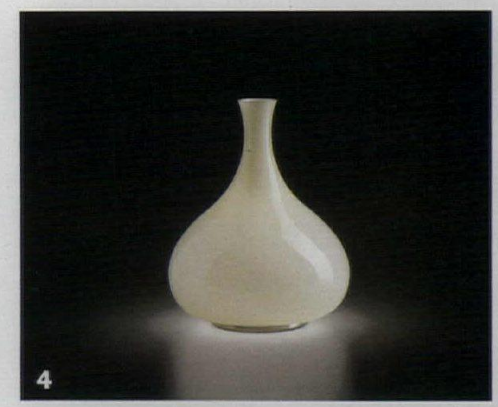
PRODUCTS

1. Stickbulb, Rux
Imagine the lamp as integral to the luminaire, and you get Rux's new Stickbulb in six different designs, all made from linear LEDs. Choose from four wood varieties including sun-bleached ipe from the Coney Island boardwalk and sustainably harvested maple. stickbulb.com.

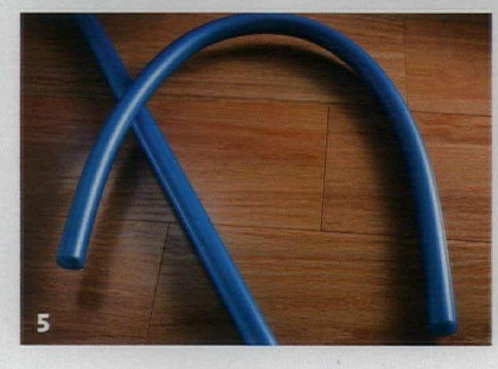
2. Wine Corks, Imagine Tile
Get the look of a counter of collected wine corks with the durability of ceramic. Imagine Tile's new pattern is sealed with a matte finish and can be used for residential or commercial applications (on walls and floors, too) in sizes 8" square or 16" square. imaginetile.com.



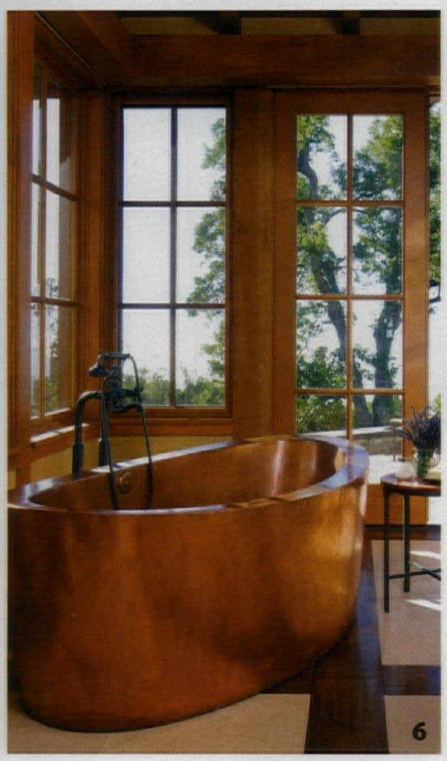
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6

3. M2L Brand, M2L
The M2L showroom—based in New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C.—has unveiled the first line of its own products, by industrial designer Manfred Petri. Hardware-less desks, credenzas, and media consoles (shown) are available in American hardwood veneers. m2l.com.

4. Eva Zeisel Collection, Leucos
The last products designed by beloved mid-century designer Eva Zeisel include pendants, wall sconces, and table lamps (Summer, shown) that display her designs' signature, organic curves. Use incandescent or fluorescent light sources, or retrofit for LEDs. leucosusa.com.

5. Hy-PE-RTube, Zurn Industries and Dow Chemical
Designed for residential and commercial hydronic heating and cooling projects, a new polyethylene tube can handle high temperatures—73 degrees for 200 psi and 180 degrees for 100 psi. Tube size ranges from 3/8" to 1" in diameter. zurn.com.

6. Ellipse Copper, Diamond Spas
A new soaking bath made from 90% to 95% recycled sheet copper, the Ellipse Copper tub comes as 42" by 72" by 24", but can be custom made in other sizes. Choose a flat- or bowed-top ledge, or stainless steel over copper, if preferred. diamondspas.com —LINDSEY M.ROBERTS



Patterned After

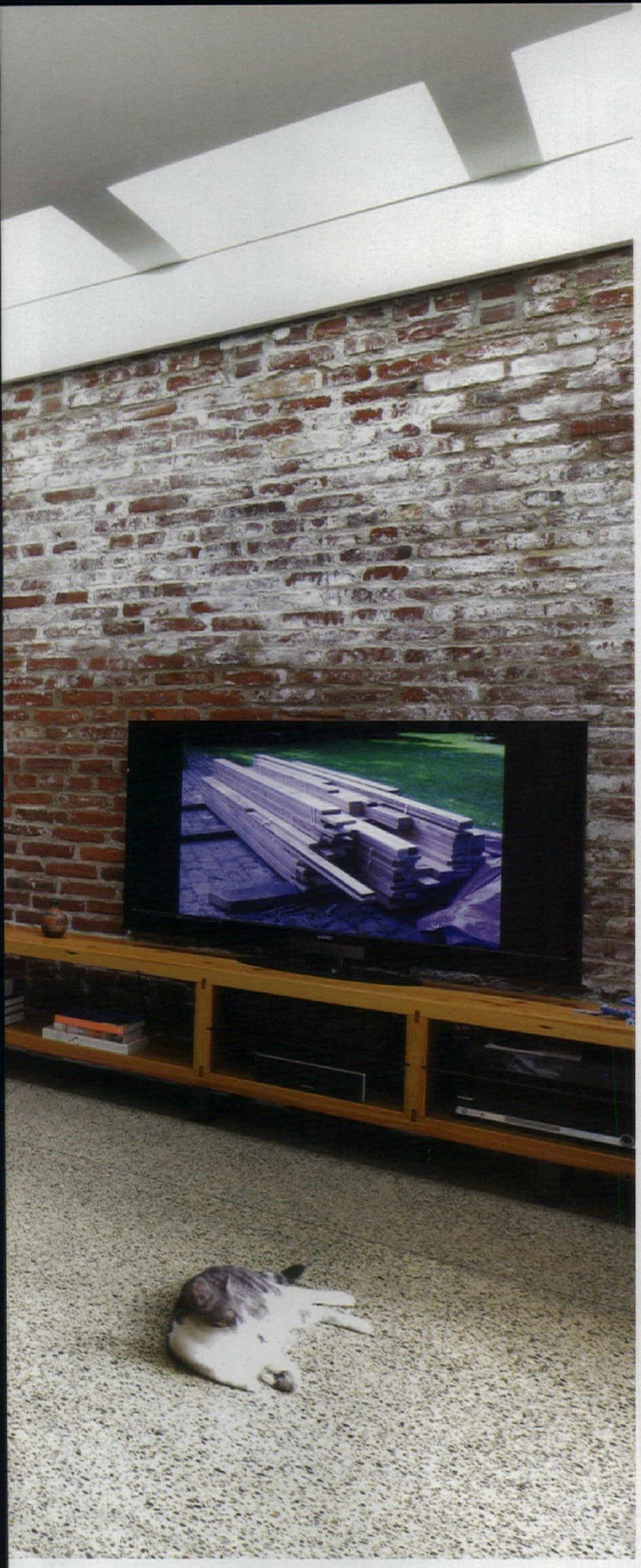
It doesn't take much prompting for an architect to design a motif for a façade and then to look down and think, "I wonder how that would look on my clothes." (After all, Frank Lloyd Wright's obsession with design extended beyond houses and furnishings to his own cape and hat.)

For years, Laurinda Spear, FAIA, founding principal of Miami-based Arquitectonica, has dreamed up patterns for projects as well as products: watches, pens, furniture. Her most recent line of architect-designed objects, created with her intern-architect daughter, Marisa Fort, includes a new line of silk scarves and ties inspired by the firm's own projects.

Lima (shown), one of the four patterns in her 2013 line, derives from a polychrome glass screen in the lobby of the 2011 Westin Hotel & Convention Center in Lima, Peru. Another, Vitruvius, is a reinterpretation of the firm's own front gate (itself inspired by the Roman architect).

Spear recently exhibited a book of her patterns at this year's Printsource, a convention in New York for textile and surface design, and hints at future goods and partnerships. "There should be a seamless transition from architecture to fashion," she says. "We accomplish this by translating architectural elements into pattern designs." —L.M.R





Project Lantern House
Location Philadelphia
Architect RKM Architects, Philadelphia
General contractor Brown Building Group, Philadelphia
Structural engineer MacIntosh Engineering, Wilmington, Del.
Mechanical engineer Urban Technology, Quakertown, Pa.
Reclaimed woodwork Paul's Woodshop, Wilmington
Metalwork The Iron Studio, Philadelphia
Project size 3,400 square feet
Site 0.05 acre
Construction cost $141 per square foot

TEXT BY MEGHAN DRUEDING
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT WARGO

The century-old former stable in Philadelphia's Fishtown neighborhood wasn't much to look at. Its roof leaked, the concrete floor slab was shot, and the existing brick walls needed extensive repairs.

But an enterprising architect couple, hoping to design their own house, saw its potential. "We'd been looking at properties all around the city," says Richard A. Miller, AIA, who runs RKM Architects with his wife, Kimberly I. Miller, AIA. "This one enabled more freedom."

At 20 feet, the lot was 5 feet wider than most of the other sites on the rowhouse-lined street. The couple wanted enough room for a studio where Richard could work full-time. (Kimberly also serves as the director of planning and design at Drexel University, so she's less involved in RKM's day-to-day operations.) And an in-law suite was important to them. "We wanted a bit of overflow space, because our parents are both getting older," Richard says.

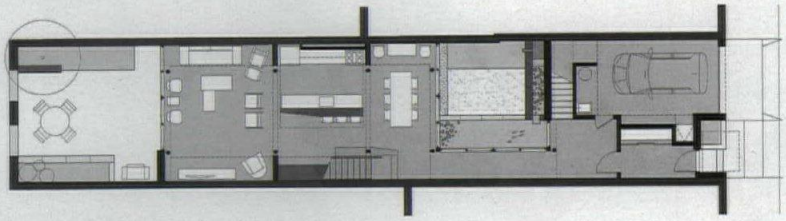
The existing building's raw materials also attracted the Millers. Many of the yellow pine roof



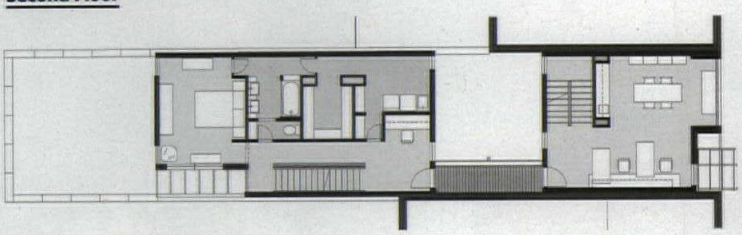
Stained yellow pine pairs with Kalwall for an unobtrusively modern façade. RKM Architects reclaimed the pine from the original structure (opposite, below) and inserted a three-story floor plan within the existing brick walls.

ADAPTIVE REUSE
CASE STUDY

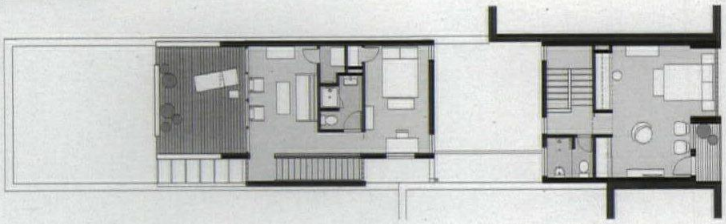
First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor





RIGHT: RKM ARCHITECTS

Lantern House (cont.)

beams were still in good shape. A woodworker friend helped salvage and refinish them, with impressive results. "When the wood went away in the truck, it looked terrible," Richard says. "When our friend planed it down, I was blown away. You can smell the sap in it." The best beams went to interior elements that showcase the wood's tight grain pattern, such as furniture and a finely detailed staircase. The rougher pieces, stained for a more uniform appearance, form an exterior rainscreen. And the couple opted to keep the stable's three original brick walls, with plenty of repointing and (in some places) steel reinforcement.

The back wall defines a southwest-facing outdoor room that the Millers call the "sun garden." In the middle of the house lies its counterpart, the 15-foot-square "shade garden," which serves as a key passive cooling component. The landscaped shade garden contains a small lily pond and light-colored gravel, and receives excellent cross-ventilation. "The idea is to create a microclimate there, based on Mediterranean and Middle Eastern atrium houses," Richard says. "We open up the doors and windows on the third floor and in the shade garden for a chimney effect." This time-honored strategy reduces the need for air conditioning. The shade garden also funnels natural light deep into the interiors—a Holy Grail of sorts for an urban residence.

While the Millers preferred a modern house, they didn't want it to look jarring next to their late 19th-century neighbors. The vertical lines of the reclaimed wood and Kalwall façade emphasize the 3,400-square-foot building's conforming height, playing down its irregular width. "The main thing that we were trying very hard to do was good design on a relatively tight budget," Miller says, noting that the project came in at $141 per square foot. "We tried to be respectful to the historic fabric. In a lot of ways, we tried to do as little as possible."

RA See full slideshows at residentialarchitect.com



TEXT BY BRUCE D. SNIDER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY VINCENT VAN DEN HOVEN

Churches are places for prayer and quiet contemplation, but architect Ronald Olthof called upon this one for a very different mission.

Located in a town of 700 people in eastern Holland, the 1928 building was eligible for a government subsidy, provided that its new owners maintained its historic exterior. Olthof and his partner, Sofie Suiker, a photo stylist and designer, accepted the challenge. Repurposing the building to be their private residence, they gave it the imprint of their own inventive and lighthearted personalities, while allowing its original devotional nature to shine through.

"It was a very simple church," Olthof says, "but it had stained glass, a bell tower, and nice arched windows, and we wanted to keep those intact. We wanted to clean out the mess, insulate it, and just put the furniture in; that was the concept. We wanted as few rooms as possible, to keep the space open." Removing a non-original ceiling opened the former sanctuary to the steeply pitched roof and exposed a fine set of king post scissor trusses. A cloudlike polished concrete floor and a coat of white paint lend the original architecture an appropriately celestial aspect.

Olthof furnished the resulting space with a collection of ostensibly freestanding elements. An unfitted kitchen, assembled from stock cabinetry and a stainless steel countertop, stretches out under a row of gothic-arch openings filled with green stained glass. Dominating the center of the space is a sculptural stair assembly that serves a number of functions. "It's a room divider, a staircase, and a closet," Olthof says. "Parts of the kitchen are built into it. It's also an exhibition wall. We clad it with the old floor boards from the church." The stair climbs to a new mezzanine level, from which the bedroom overlooks the living space below through a floor-to-ceiling glass wall.

The bright red of the staircase reappears as an occasional accent color elsewhere in the interior. "I'm an architect, so I like black and white," Olthof says, laughing. "My girlfriend is a stylist, and she likes more color." Testing various schemes with a computer model settled the matter, he says. "We saw that too much color would detract from the quality of the building. So when you walk through the house, you only see one accent at a time."

Alterations to the exterior are discreet yet distinct from the original structure. A 1960s-era addition that hugs one side wall of the building accommodates laundry, storage, and bathroom spaces. A shipping container—serving as a detached garage with a porchlike, covered outdoor seating area—stands in the garden, which was excavated to 1 meter below the sidewalk elevation. The container's arrival stirred some alarm in the village, Olthof remembers. But with its green roof, and wood cladding that segues into a new garden wall, the steel box all but disappears. "From the street, you don't even see that it's part of the shipping container," he says. "It looks like a fence."

Project God's Loft
Location Haarlo, Netherlands
Architect LKSVDD, Hengelo, Netherlands
General contractor Teunissen en Boers, Haarlo, Netherlands
Project size 2,370 square feet
Site 0.19 acres
Construction cost $147 per square foot

RA See full slideshows at residentialarchitect.com

God's Loft (cont.)



ADAPTIVE REUSE

CASE STUDY









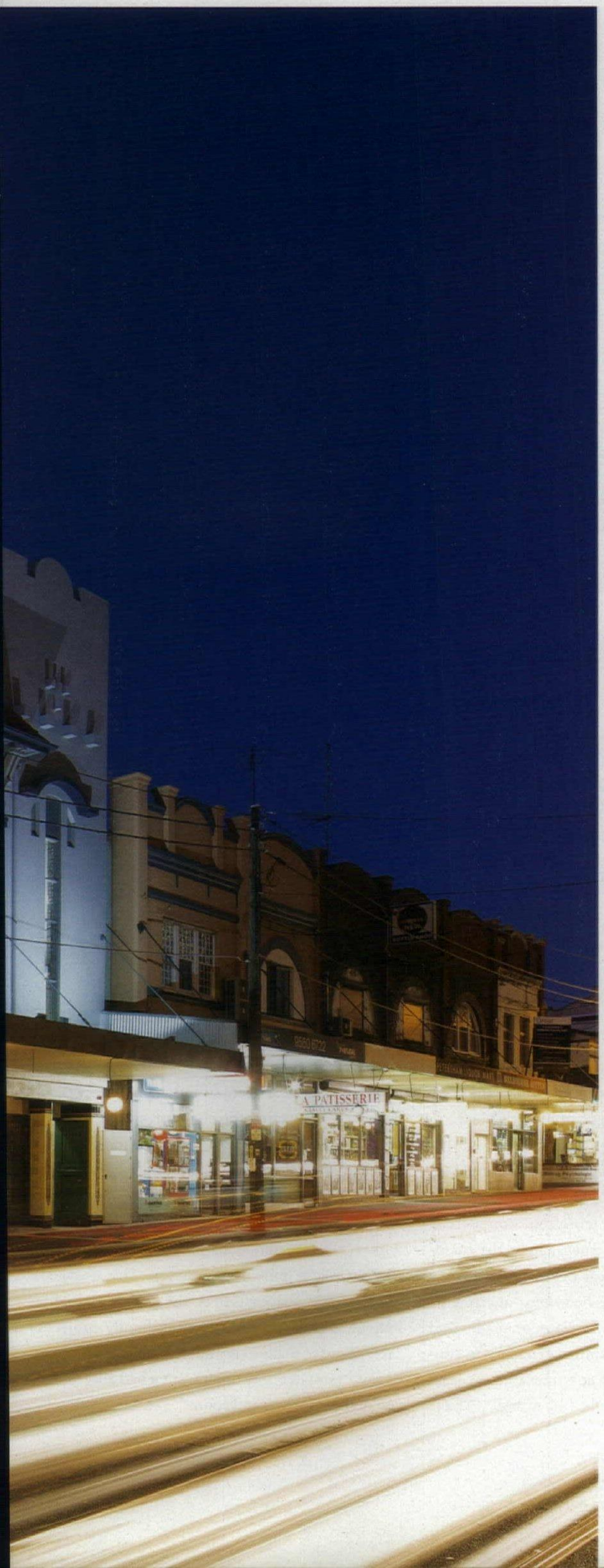
Opposite: A glass-walled loft overlooks the living space. 1. A shipping container topped with a green roof serves as a detached garage with a sheltered patio. 2. Set below sidewalk level, the garage integrates unobtrusively with the garden wall. 3. The building's old floorboards clad the staircase. 4. Removing an existing ceiling exposed the original roof trusses.

TOP RIGHT: SUSARVISUALS



Project The Majestic
Location Petersham, New South Wales, Australia
Architect Hill Thalis Architecture + Urban Projects, Surry Hills, New South Wales
General contractor Growthbuilt, Surry Hills
Developer Trinium Group, Surry Hills
Structural/civil engineer Paul Bekker Engineering Design Buro, Neutral Bay, New South Wales
Project size 26,296 square feet total/538 to 732 square feet per unit
Site 0.3 acre
Construction cost $246 per square foot
Rental/sales price $417 to $521 per week/ $417,043 to $521,304
Units in project 27

TEXT BY BRUCE D. SNIDER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRETT BOARDMAN



In its long and storied career, the Majestic Theatre has lived through incarnations as a vaudeville venue, a movie palace, a roller skating rink, and now an apartment building.

But if architects Sarah Hill and Philip Thalis had had their way, it never would have made its most recent transformation. When their builder/developer clients first floated the idea, Thalis says, "we said, 'Don't buy it. It's too big for you.' But of course they couldn't resist a bargain." Thus overruled, the architects proceeded to design a 27-unit mixed-use retrofit that reconnects the building with the vibrant urban life around it, preserves and celebrates its colorful history, and makes its architects happy to admit they were wrong.

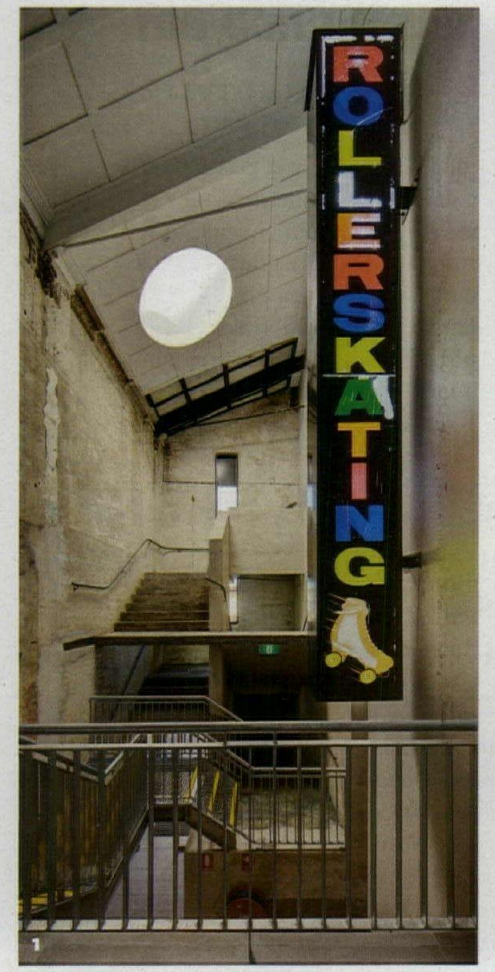
A landmark in Sydney's Petersham neighborhood since 1921, the Majestic's picturesque Moorish façade had been dark for some 20 years when Hill and Thalis went to work planning its rebirth. "The building was heritage listed, and we are accredited heritage architects, so we wanted to respect its original form," Thalis says. But the largely windowless shell posed an obstacle. "It was like a big barn," he says. To create a residential atmosphere and to meet mandatory standards for natural light and cross ventilation, the architects pulled the living spaces in from the building's perimeter, creating open-air circulation zones and private balconies partially or fully within the existing brick walls. "Effectively, there's a new building inserted into the heart of the shell," Thalis says.

Multistory lobbies at the front and rear of the building preserve remnants of its past: original stairways, some of which are intact and functional, while others remain as floating sculpture or ghosted on a brick wall; a pressed-tin ceiling; a lighted "Rollerskating" sign. "The original front façade was restored," Thalis says, "but we display all the periods of the building, including

ADAPTIVE REUSE

CASE STUDY

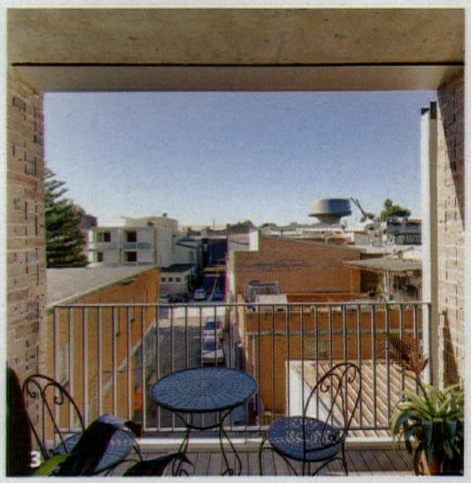
Majestic (cont.)



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1, 5. Remnants of the building's former lives grace its refashioned circulation spaces. 2. Five stacked balconies project from the west elevation. 3. Saw cuts expose the building's 18-inch-thick brick walls. 4. Apartment units meet strict mandatory standards for natural light and cross-ventilation.

RA See full slideshows at residentialarchitect.com

the roller rink years. You can see where the seating used to be ... all the signs of life. It's meant to expose the pattern of the building."

In practical terms, Thalis says, "the brief was to maximize the number of units and the amount of retail square footage." Storefront commercial spaces opening onto a narrow lane at the building's west side occupy most of the ground floor. Spare and efficient one-bedroom apartments fill the three floors above, in a mix of single- and multi-level plans that maximize exposure to sunlight and fresh air. "Every apartment has at least one balcony; quite a number have two," Thalis says. "And there are lots of indoor/outdoor views from apartments into the common spaces."

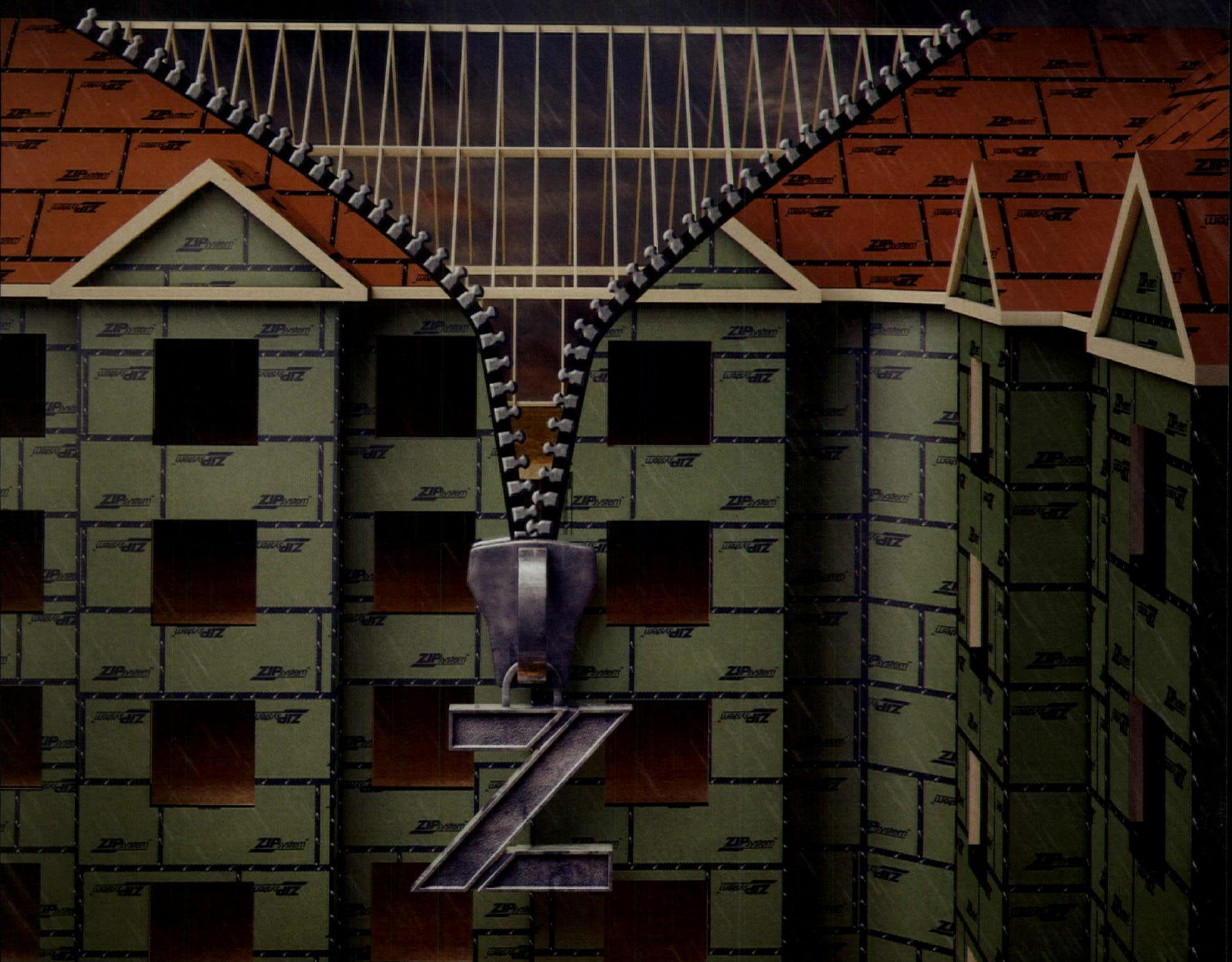
The apartments' clean, lean interiors contrast with rougher elements of the building's historic structure: 18-inch-thick brick walls, saw-cut for new balconies; aged plaster and paint, preserved with a clear sealer; and, in top-floor units, the roof's Oregon pine roof trusses. The engaged, idiosyncratic spaces reflect the partners' highly individualized approach to multifamily projects. "You've got to make every apartment livable," Thalis says. "You not only don't want a bad apartment, you don't want one bad room."

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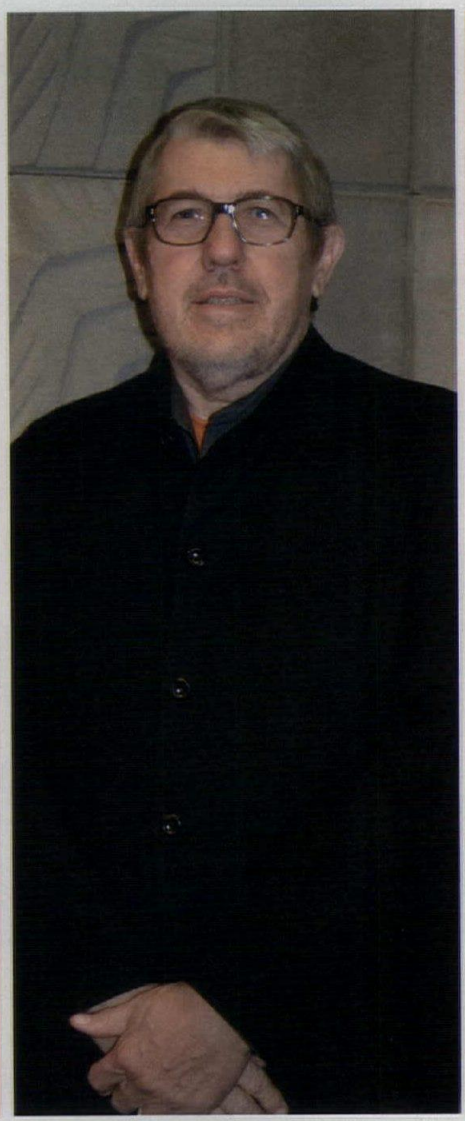
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why I love residential architecture



"I realize that architecture is about the creation of memories. Memories are about lives. And the house is sort of the hearth of those memories. I find an intriguing scale and purpose to a house that is so elemental. You have the opportunity to not just bring yourself to the table as much as to create things that reflect your client's expectations and desires. And that's very gratifying."

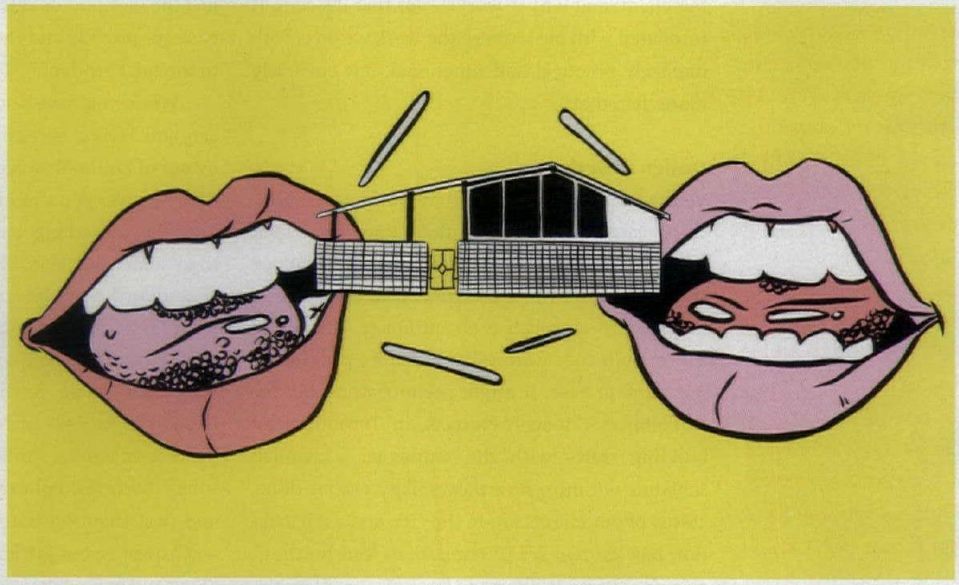
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Talking Points

DESIGN IS AN ART, AND GETTING BUY-IN IS ANOTHER.

TEXT BY CHERYL WEBER, LEED AP
ILLUSTRATION BY KELSEY DAKE

Are the most articulate architects always the best at selling their design ideas? Not necessarily. Convincing clients—and contractors and review boards, for that matter—to go along with your vision can be tricky. San Francisco architects Steven House, AIA, and Cathi House, principals of House + House Architects, recall a client who disliked the color green, but who embraced a sage-hued house that complements the surrounding Mexican desert. And then there was the gentleman who said that the only thing he knew for sure was that he hated corrugated metal. Yet when the time came to pick materials, he approved it for his home's roof and siding.

Did the positive reactions rest just on the strength of the scheme? Good chemistry? Personal charisma? Or did it help that the Houses showed the Mexico client 30 percent more color samples than usual, part of a process they call "helping them see."

"With clients, we speak naturally and with a passion," says Cathi, who gave up using architectural lingo long ago.

E.B. Min, AIA, a principal at Min | Day in San Francisco, agrees that clients respond poorly to academic-speak. Every architect should be lucky enough to have mentors like hers: landscape architects Topher Delaney and Andrea Cochran, who produced bold, sculptural gardens bordering on avant-garde. Min paid close attention to the way they talked and the words they used. "I realized they wouldn't talk about their work as if it were a

Speech Therapy

For young architects who are used to texting, facing a client across the conference table can be daunting. But at House + House Architects, interns are schooled in the art of speaking. During office design crits, new hires are often asked how they would change their presentation for a client. "We start with new clients in a very simplistic way: Let's look at a site plan—what the north arrow means to us in terms of sun studies. We show them how to read the drawings so they're not embarrassed to admit they don't understand," Cathi says.

She shares a few other pointers:

Be prepared. Anticipate questions that will come up and craft a proper answer. "Young architects don't want to appear ignorant and will often make things up. If you don't know the answer, be honest."

Practice adaptability. Then you're not shaken if a client hates an idea. "Students often take things personally. But when a paying client disagrees, you can't be arrogant. Take a breath, ask a question to make sure you understood, and come back with a thoughtful comment and the same level of enthusiasm."

There's a place for poetry. Rather than talking to clients about style, the Houses encourage staff to describe what a wall can do. "It casts shadows, divides, unites, glows. Let's add another wall; what happens as you start to enclose adjacent spaces? Then when they present a whole building, they have a better way of speaking about visual choreography and emotional sequencing."

Avoid tangents. When talking to building officials, be careful not to denigrate the regulations they're trying to uphold. And what you don't say is almost as important as what you do say. "If their main concern is height or bulk, those are the things to address. It's best if you can help control the dialogue. Architecture is more than art. You're providing a service, and the better you can communicate, the more effective you are." —*C.W.*

precious art piece," Min says. "Andie always talked about how what they were proposing works for the client, and why it works—not that it's cool. It resonated with me because the work we do is both intensely practical and functional, but obviously more than that."

Design as Verb

Veteran architects realize that working relationships carry more weight than lines on paper. A theoretical framework is a useful way to see things, and architects are trained to use esoteric language to establish their authority. But to get things built they need to both inspire people and put them at ease. It might seem obvious, but for Williamson Chong Architects, in Toronto, trust building starts with the mundane: a detailed schedule outlining how they will get the job done. "Most of our clients are in the city, and each location has its own set of regulations and hurdles," principal Betsy Williamson says. "You explain the big process and then make it seem effortless. Once they are confident about the services side, they tend to trust us more with design."

While passion is contagious, so is a sense of rigor. Clients can see you're not following a script. "Trust has to do with doing your homework," says John Sparano, AIA, principal at Sparano + Mooney Architecture, with offices in Los Angeles and Salt Lake City. "You have to show clients that you understand their needs, the program, budget, site, and jurisdictional issues." And, he adds, routinely exceeding their expectations—going the extra mile to explore all the possibilities—helps maintain that trust.

For DeForest Architects, in Seattle, that means eliciting what is emotionally important to clients. One way to do that is with early, guided conversations. The firm asks clients to list the places they've lived and, in five sentences, describe the most memorable ones. In response to a current client's request for "a place in the trees," for example, DeForest's design registers the history of the wooded site. A tree cut down to make room for the house will be milled into desktops, and the flooring will subtly mark where other trees stood. The exercise often resonates deep down. It's a good place to start a project, and to return to as a touchstone.

"Design is a verb," says principal John DeForest, AIA. "The value of what we do is more than just the nice photos at the end. It is also the experience we provide and the depth of meaning it adds to the final product."

When you have a strong conceptual base, you can add layers, agrees Louise Braverman, FAIA, owner of Louise Braverman Architect in New York City. "It gives you a reference point for later showing why something makes more sense logically than something else. Sometimes clients don't realize that these arbitrary things fly in the face of what they want to do on a larger level."

Arthur W. Andersson, AIA, principal at Andersson Wise Architects, in Austin, Texas, likens the process of hatching emotional guideposts to making a Rorschach test. The architects solicit textures, colors, and images from clients and post them on the studio wall. "We let them wash over us; our job is to distill and edit," he says. "Ernest Hemingway wrote the final chapter of *A Farewell to Arms* something like 46 times. We tell clients, 'It becomes your house, but not overnight or even in two months.'"

Braverman does something similar. She talks to clients about design as a generalized idea that will get more specific over time. "You will see things you don't like, or are unsure about, and that is fine," she says.

The Art of Persuasion

Preparation matters, of course, but as the project develops, clients inevitably have ideas that clash with the direction you're going. Architects have varying techniques for resolving product and material disagreements. When San Antonio, Texas, architect Jim Poteet, AIA, LEED AP, recently designed an all-white loft, he was able to flip his client's request for a black-painted guest bath by suggesting black-on-gray wallpaper. "We talk about the play of light and how a space feels rather than relating it back to some kind of intellectual construct," he says.

Most patrons want to be challenged, and they want their architect to be confident and definitive. Some are interested in hearing the design presented in words architects might use to talk to each other. Others want to feel like a part of the process.

Either way, Min tries to come on confidently, but without arrogance. "Any time we've started with the way it looks, it hasn't gone well," Min says. "We give them something they're not expecting, but it does what they asked it to do. There might be something inventive about the design, and they'll see it and agree with it."

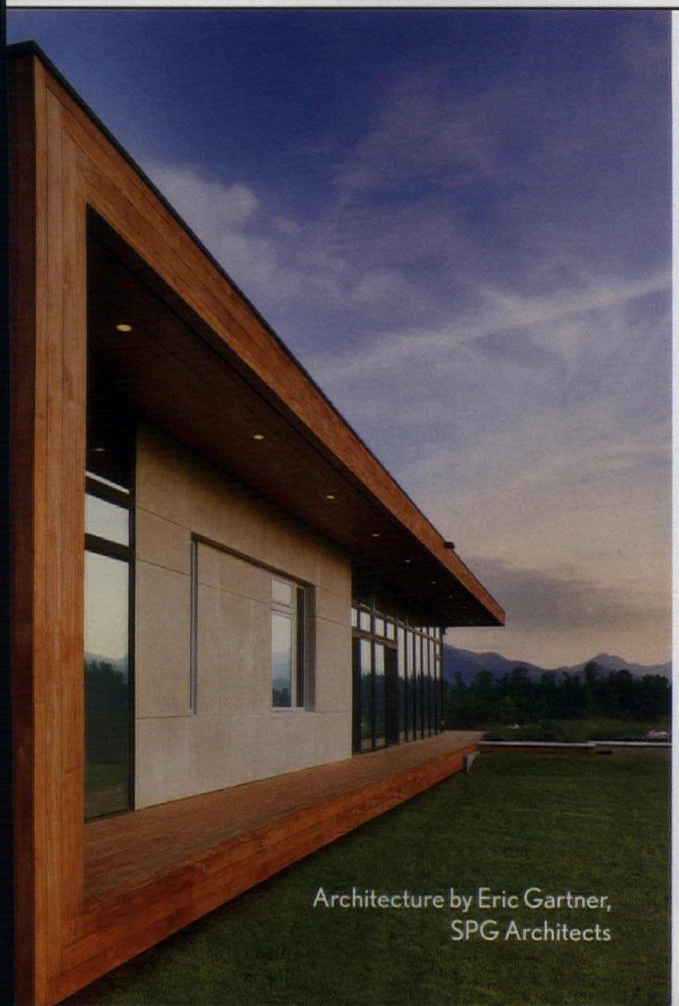
Often, she says, people resist a strong color that she'll suggest. So she brings mock-ups, showing degrees of the colors they wanted, including her more intense choice. "If they insisted, we'd be prepared to follow through, so we'll have options that are good and make sense. But often they see what a difference the color makes, and then they get really excited because we did all they asked, and more. Many of our clients are analytical too; they want to understand the internal calculus—why we like something or don't."

In disagreements, usually there's something right about clients' thinking, observes John Ike, LEED AP, a principal at Ike Kligerman Barkley Architects, with offices in New York City and San Francisco. The key is to approach it in a different way to reach consensus, perhaps by telling a story, showing a photograph, or taking a trip. When recent clients insisted on divided-light wood windows in one section of a home that mixes modern and traditional elements, principal Thomas A. Kligerman, LEED AP, steered them away from the idea by evoking Greenfield Village near Detroit, a mélange of historic districts built by Henry Ford. "Fortunately, they'd just been there and I was able to move the project along toward coherence," he says.

Words are powerful, but so is presentation. Andersson often relies on impromptu sketches to get clients onboard. "I can draw my buildings upside-down for a client on the other side of the table; if something is confusing, they get it," he says. Sparano arrives at meetings with three simple models that illustrate his thought processes. Patrons are impressed that the firm is exploring issues they hadn't even thought about.

But is there such a thing as too much infor-

"I REALIZED THEY WOULDN'T TALK ABOUT THEIR WORK AS IF IT WERE A PRECIOUS ART PIECE. THEY TALKED ABOUT HOW WHAT THEY WERE PROPOSING WORKS FOR THE CLIENT, AND WHY IT WORKS—NOT THAT IT'S COOL."
—E. B. MIN


Architecture by Eric Gartner, SPG Architects

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mation? Williamson recalls former employers who earned trust through their stellar service ethic but successfully hid the hard work of design. Rather than showing every iteration, the firm presented one glorious concept where all of the client's problems were solved.

The Houses, who are poetic yet down to earth, don't agree. They believe that technology, as seductive as it is, can shortcut complexity. "We show clients every sketch and scribble," from prevailing weather diagrams to a series of organizational ideas that address how they might live, Steven says. "Straightaway they let go of the picture in some magazine from the grocery checkout."

When clients say, "We love this material and have to have it in our house," the Houses behave as if they agree with them. It's best if you can help clients come to conclusions themselves, Cathi says, as they did with the woman in Mexico who had ruled out green. "We let them know we're on a journey and help them find answers from the right sources—the light, setting, color of the sea and sky. We look at their art, furniture, the things their home sits amongst and say, 'Let's put them together into a beautiful palette.' We'll put up samples—see how this looks with that—but the green goes in there to help them confirm or disallow what they've already felt. They are always the ones who say, 'It has to be green.'"

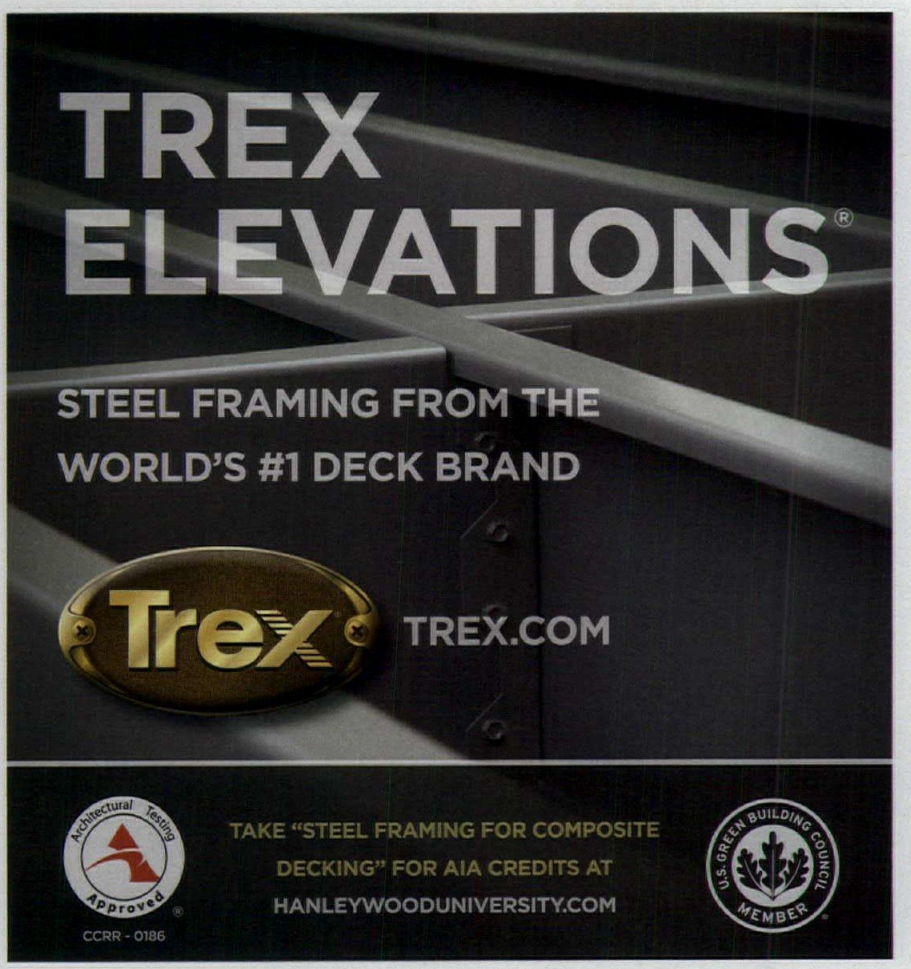
Straight Talk

Of course, clients represent only half the effort of getting designs built. Architects have to switch gears verbally when talking to stakeholders such as contractors and planning commissions. Once you hand over the drawings, the builder has all the control; and often, tradespeople don't understand the big picture they're working toward, Poteet says, putting his finger on one of the challenges of inspiring high-quality field work. "Most of the buy-in comes from having subs who are up for new things, but I realize now that they're working on faith," he says. "We show them photorealistic renderings when the budget allows. Once they understand what the project is going to be, they become very excited."

Aware that the success of a building depends on the materials and the people who handle them, Andersson, too, uses samples, images, and words to show subs what he's after. "We often say we want these buildings to last 2,000 years," he says. "They look at you funny, but the people who make our projects have a great understanding of materiality. If you keep it simple, you just have to step out of the way."

But as projects become increasingly more complex, collaboration matters more than ever. Contractors usually avoid stepping on people's toes because they want referrals for future work—all the more reason why they need to understand a design's origins. DeForest shares records of how the concept has proceeded and the things that matter to the client. Then, he says, the contractor doesn't have to wonder whether he owes it to the client to mention that a particular curve will be cool but really expensive.

"I'd rather contractors understand the dialogue that's been going on and feel perfectly comfortable offering another idea. Often they edit themselves because they think, 'Oh, John really wants to do that complicated roof system.' No, we want to do something that delights the client and that they can afford," says DeForest, who tries to use language that makes design approachable and engaging.



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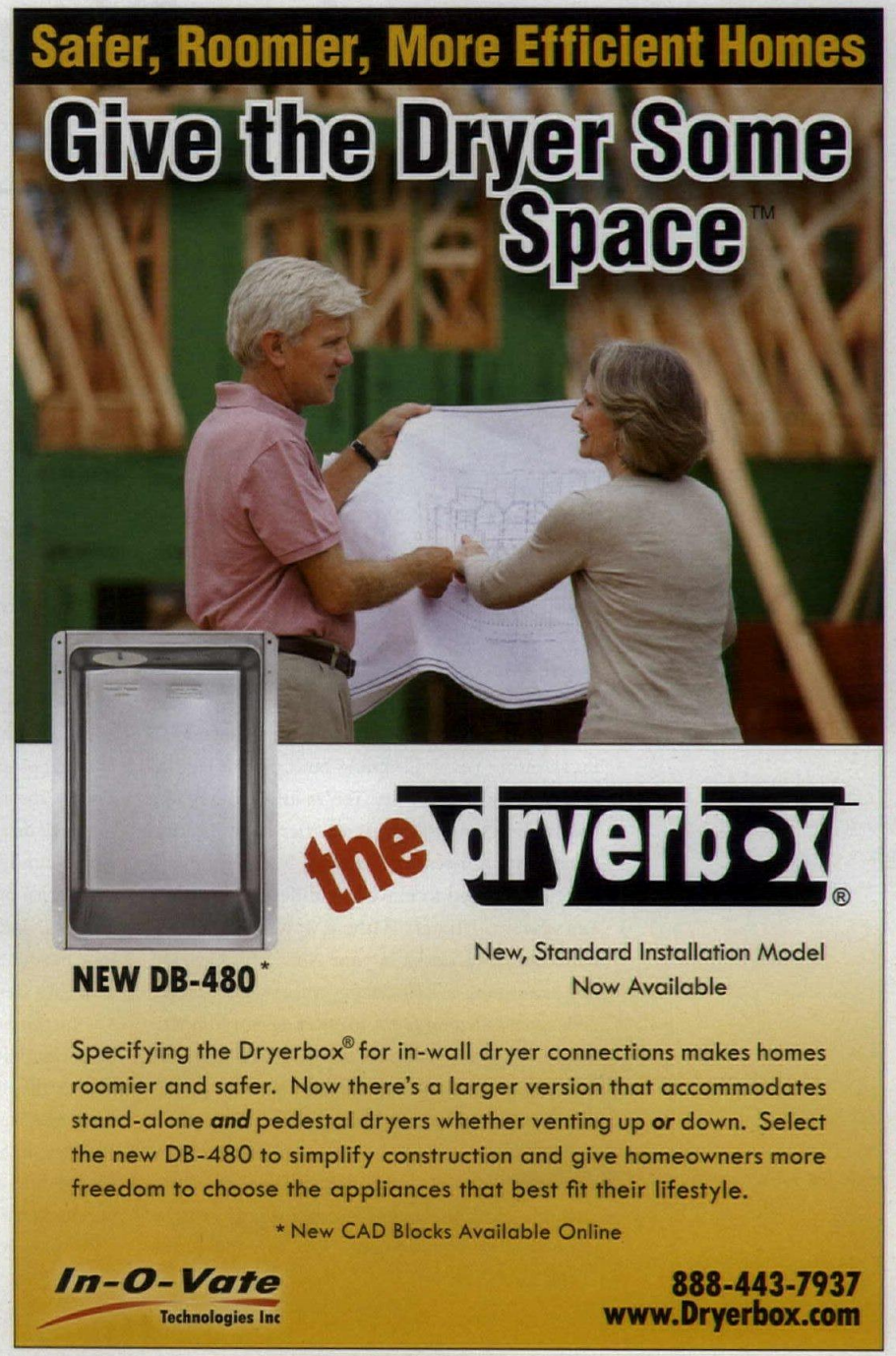
"WE TALK ABOUT THE PLAY OF LIGHT AND HOW A SPACE FEELS RATHER THAN RELATING IT BACK TO SOME KIND OF INTELLECTUAL CONSTRUCT."
—JIM POTEET

Ditto for review boards, where straight talk is essential. And there's no substitute for researching baseline requirements. While review boards are interested in big issues such as adherence to ordinances, community groups, which are often comprised of non-architects, care more about upholding property values. Sparano achieves buy-in by providing context with models that accurately represent neighboring properties, and striking a balance of clarity and conviction.

Knowing ahead of time how much leeway may be granted helps, too. Even a veteran like Ike can miscalculate. Recently, while presenting to an architectural review board on Nantucket, he was surprised when a 2-inch deviation from a house's existing window alignment was denied. After tweaking the design, Ike adopted a friendly conversational style that still failed to sway the jury. "I solicited their thoughts and subtly played up the fact that I was from New England and had spent summers at the shore, but they rejected it again," he says. "I didn't realize that ½-inch made such a difference."

Sometimes a one-on-one effort can reverse a vote. After committee members politely denied Min's proposal for a substantial addition in Los Altos, Calif., she invited each member individually to the site where she demonstrated how the design would respect the neighbors. It passed unanimously.

No one wins every battle. But when it comes to conveying ideas, Min has had success occupying the middle ground between high-minded and homespun. "Our clients usually have art in their lives somewhere, so it's a given they're looking for creative energy," she says. "If you're happy with what you're showing, they get excited too. You don't have to be self-conscious about it." ⌂



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Audrey Matlock Architect

HER MANHATTAN FIRM MERGES ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING, AND FINE ART.

TEXT BY CHERYL WEBER, LEED AP
PORTRAIT BY IAN ALLEN

If you are Audrey Matlock, FAIA, this is how an architecture career happens: You get a master's degree at Yale, work short stints for Richard Meier, FAIA, and Peter Eisenman, FAIA, and then land at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, where you spend 10 invigorating years designing buildings of significant size and complexity. You're lured briefly to a design director position at another large international firm. A recession is raging, but you think to yourself, "I need to move in a different direction, and why waste time?" Without work or a plan, you build out some desks in your New York City loft and hand-pick a half-dozen out-of-work former colleagues, all volunteers, to enter design competitions with you. You choose competitions that have interesting programs and sites, the work generates creative energy, and you end up with serious projects to show. You also teach yourself to write proposals for assorted public work—an aquarium, a couple of library additions, and school renovations. Soon enough, someone says yes, and within a year you're Audrey Matlock Architect, looking for office space.

Smart and resourceful, with a staff of 12, Matlock has a keen eye for the texture of a neighborhood, the contour of a landscape, and the poetry of exposed super-structure. Since founding her firm in the mid-1990s, she has garnered acclaim for work on a variety of programs and scales, from single-family homes and high-rise condominiums to a series of buildings for Armstrong World Industries, including its striking 125,000-square-foot headquarters in Lancaster, Pa., a collaboration with Gensler.

In the last few years, Matlock's connections have catapulted her across the globe. In Kazakhstan, a difficult place to build, she is just finishing up a gossamer gatehouse (two tilted glass cubes) and welcome center for a future mixed-use project. There's also a lavish, 30,000-square-foot residence perched on a mountainside in an earthquake zone, with massive retaining walls that create indoor/





COURTESY AUDREY MATLOCK ARCHITECT

outdoor terraces. Its owner developed the Medeu Sports Center, which she also designed. Set in the foothills of the Tian Shan Mountains, only the roof of the below-grade sports complex is visible. It is composed of kinetic, zinc-clad ribbons and irregular clerestories that evoke the movement of athletics and the profile of the surrounding mountains.

Matlock is driven by a penchant for research and discovery. "A leader is the easiest thing to be," she says. "I think the way to achieve real success is to do something that hasn't been done before."

Back in New York, there's ample opportunity for reinvention and a lot of money looking for somewhere to go. Matlock's knack for innovation has turned the heads of developers such as Robert Gladstone of Madison Equities, who hired her to design the Chelsea Modern residential tower, near the High Line and the Hudson River. Rising 12 stories, it sits mid-block near some of the city's most expressive architecture, such as Frank Gehry's IAC building and the Standard hotel, and it demonstrates her commitment to the specifics of program, context, and site. Almost as wide as it is tall, the building had a height limit of 120 feet and a mandatory setback of 85 feet or less—a common zoning requirement that too often results in a wedding cake effect, or, as Gladstone puts it, "a glass dog house on top of a glass box." Matlock finessed the setback with pleated horizontal bands of clear and cobalt-blue glass that ripple across the street façade and reference the nearby river.

"The skin of the building is something Audrey gets and controls extraordinarily well," Gladstone says. Those sensuous movements were also proforma-friendly: Every piece of glass is the same size, and the 5-foot-deep undulations provided a lot of depth without sacrificing interior space. Windows on special hinges, which she says had never been used before in New York, push straight out, optimizing airflow and changing the building's face throughout the day. "The technology was available but expensive, so we developed a way to fabricate it," she says. "We're very interested in structure and technological advancements. How can we solve problems, but also make architecture, using this wide array of things at our disposal now?"

That window design is scaled up at Irving Place, a luxury 11-story building in Gramercy Park completed for the same developer. There, motorized 5-foot-by-10-foot windows on scissor hinges pop open with the push of a button. "Often, I'm completely convinced that something new will work, but [real estate] brokers go on past history: This is what sells," she says. "No, it's what sold last time. When the formula changes, it takes a developer with a little more confidence to be the first to take a step."

She's referring to her initial plan to push the envelope, literally, at Irving Place with walls on the building's face that would open to recessed terraces. "We floated the idea, and everyone was afraid to do it; six months later a developer did it on 19th Street, and it was a massive, smash success," she says. In the elegant alternative version, vertically stacked glass projections at the dining and living spaces stand out in relief, differentiating the single and duplex units. "I like a little bit of indication on the outside of the building about the specifics of what's going on inside," she says. The design abstracts the patterns of the neighborhood's beautiful mid-19th-century homes, whose varying bays and other architectural elements reflect their internal organization.

Matlock's fascination with materials, structural aesthetics, and assembly began during her earlier years as a sculptor. After studying fine arts at Syracuse University, she spent several years in San Francisco working for Frank Oppenheimer, who founded the Exploratorium, a museum about science and perception at the Palace of Fine Arts. There she designed large-scale environmental sculpture that demonstrated the principles of physics. But soon she grew disillusioned. "I found that, though I worked with teams of people, working as an artist was, in many ways, a very lonely world," Matlock says. "There weren't a lot of other stakeholders. It became clear to me that working with larger environmental projects in situ, part of a city or landscape, was much more interesting to me, so the next step was clearly to do it on the level of architecture."

After launching her practice, work came in the

Matlock excels at mixing contextual design with new technologies and materials. Irving Place's serene "living façade" consists of vertically stacked bays that lend individuality to each luxury condo. Large windows pop straight out, allowing for maximum airflow.

reverse order from what most architects expect. Within a year or two she landed the Armstrong commission—an award-winning visitors' center, new conference center, and headquarters expansion. It was her first major work outside of New York, and it put the firm on the map. "It was odd, but that was the easier work for me to get because so much of my career at SOM had been spent working on significant buildings," Matlock says, recalling how SOM supported younger architects by allowing them to be lead designers on large projects. "Friends would tell me about their apartment renovations and I would say, 'Gee, we could do that.' They'd say, 'You don't want to do that; you do real buildings.' I had a hard time convincing people, and a lot of those things passed us by."

A native of Olean, N.Y., Matlock lives in Tribeca, a few blocks from her four-story storefront studio on Broadway. The bookshelf-lined first floor has a large work table inside the front door, and Matlock looks up every now and then to return a wave from someone on the street. "People see us every day because we're on their route," she says. "We've gotten work that way."

One can wait days to talk to her, but when you do you have her full attention. She speaks quickly and likes to explain what she does. Yet when asked what personal vision informs her work, Matlock hesitates. "I think there are some aspects of the creative mind that you don't necessarily articulate," she says. "There are things you gravitate toward. Every idea doesn't come from a totally logical place. You see it, you feel it's right, you do it, it's you."

A couple of years ago, a well-known architecture critic commented that Matlock's work has blood and guts; another defined it as macho. "I thought it was amusing. They were saying it doesn't look like a girl's work should look," she says. "There's a real satisfaction I get from designing buildings that are what they say they are. When the structure starts making sense, it looks right, too."

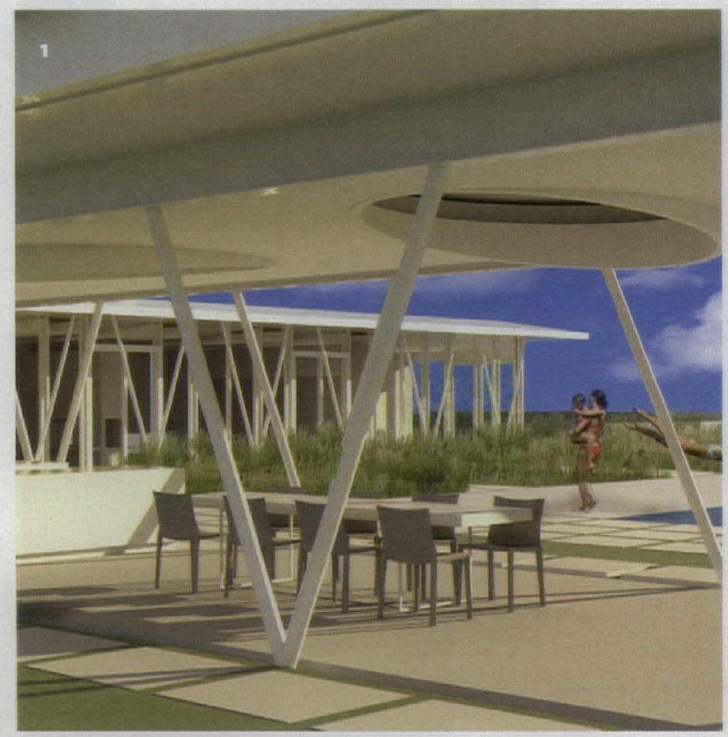
There is a yin to the yang. Currently in construction is a bar-shaped house on 12 acres in East Hampton, N.Y. A software entrepreneur and his wife had fallen in love with the quiet, tailored lines of another house that Matlock had designed nearby and asked her to create a weekend home that feels active, informal, and restful. The house she designed for them is composed of two perpendicular wings, one resting on the other to create sheltered entertaining space beneath. Delicate, V-shaped white steel columns factor into both the ground-level and elevated volumes, bringing to mind the landscape's lacy tree branches and allowing an unobstructed view from inside to outside.

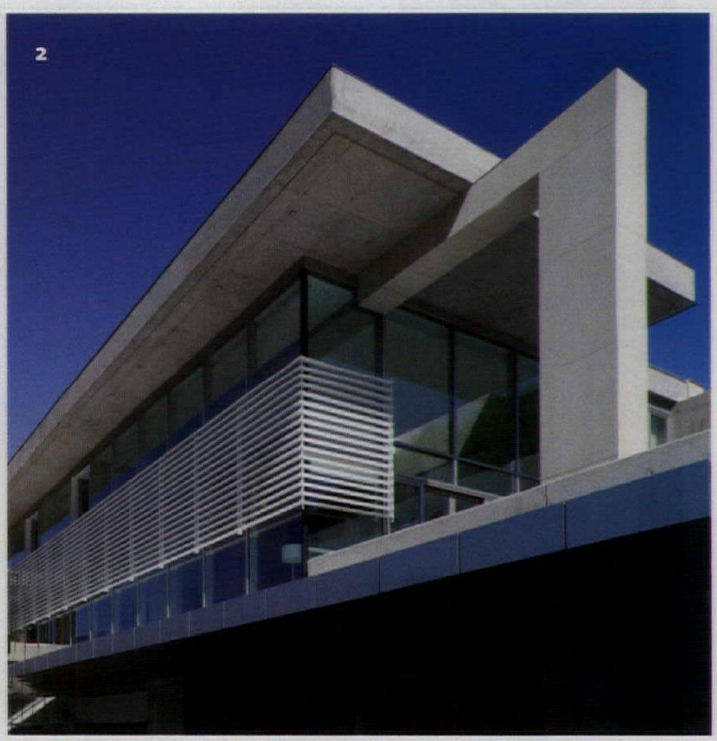
For the same family, she's finishing up a Brooklyn penthouse that joins two units of a waterfront building in the Williamsburg neighborhood. Its calming interior gives no clue to the complications encountered, such as rerouting the kitchen plumbing through a drop ceiling in the apartment below to accommodate the existing weight-bearing columns. "Audrey is extremely diligent, attentive, and patient with us," the husband says. "She's one of the people in the universe who is more fussy than I am, in terms of thinking things through from all relevant vantage points." He adds: "Most surprising to me is how making things flush and eliminating visual clutter creates a much more pleasant environment to live in. It matters more than I would have thought, and Audrey pushes on those things that really matter."

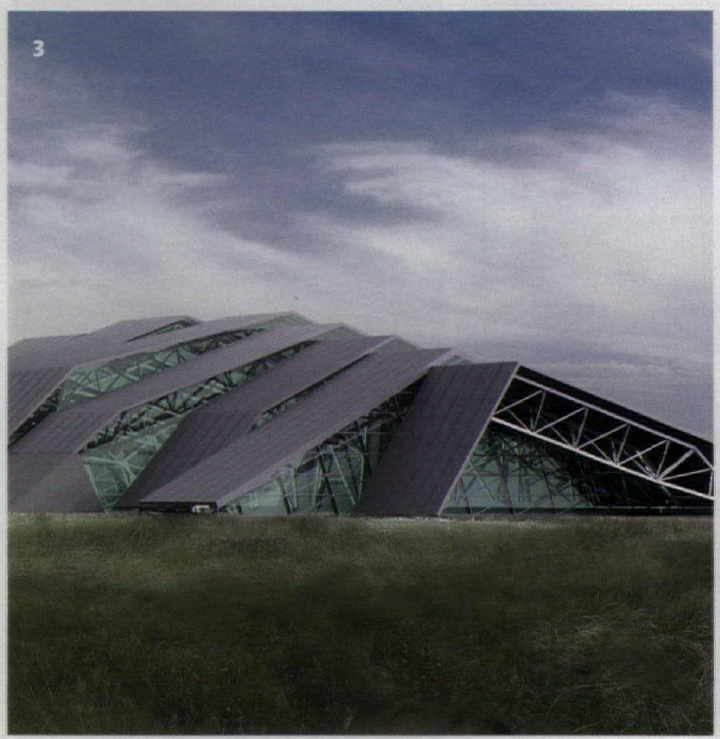
Matlock is focused on a variety of projects at the moment, among them several single-family and loft residences; a Bronx firehouse expansion; a 10,000-square-foot North Forest Park Library addition and renovation in Queens; and an invited competition entry for the Thames Street Residences, a 58-story building south of the World Trade Center.

Like most architects, her career trajectory has been slow and steady. "Many things have turned little corners, each one hard fought," she says. "And just when people started coming out of the woodwork looking for us and willing to pay our fees, the recession hit." Never one to stand still, though, Matlock is turning another corner as work rebounds, capitalizing on her Kazakhstan connections by opening an office in Istanbul. "It's a good place to work from," she says confidently, characteristically keeping her sights on the opportunities that are right in front of her. ⌂

1. Bar House, Sag Harbor, N.Y. 2. Tian Shan Mountain House, Almaty, Kazakhstan 3. Medeu Sports Center, Almaty, Kazakhstan 4. Penthouse, Brooklyn, N.Y.









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Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects

BOSTON

TEXT BY MEGHAN DRUEDING

No matter how comfortable an office is, it never feels quite like home. But Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects' workspace comes closer than most: The firm has integrated a living room/library into its downtown Boston office. Complete with a sofa, leather chairs, a coffee table, bookshelves, and a (non-working) fireplace, the cozy comfort zone brings a residential atmosphere to the 15-person studio. The living room concept has accompanied Albert, Righter & Tittmann through several moves over 17 years. "It's always come with us in some format," says principal Jacob Albert, AIA. Staff members often eat lunch around the coffee table, and clients enjoy the casual friendliness the arrangement conveys. "It shows we do pay attention to what it's like to live," Albert explains. "It's very relevant to our work. The living room doesn't take up that much of the space, but it has a big impact."

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Architect: Raino Ogden Architects

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—David Raino-Ogden, Architect

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